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DE RUCNDT #0981/01 3021935  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 281935Z OCT 08 ZDK  
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5195  
INFO RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0734

UNCLAS USUN NEW YORK 000981

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INL, G/TIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRIM](#) [AORC](#) [UNGA](#)

SUBJECT: UNGA THIRD COMMITTEE DISCUSSES CRIME PREVENTION,  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE, AND INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL

¶1. SUMMARY: During the UN General Assembly Third Committee's formal discussion on crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control, speakers agreed that trafficking in drugs, weapons, and persons, and money laundering were cyclical and linked to terrorism, requiring coordinated international efforts. Some Member States noted that the abuse of some drugs, like cocaine and opium, had declined, meanwhile abuse of cannabis remained a problem and abuse of amphetamines was on the rise. The need for more attention to the care and rehabilitation of drug users was a common theme. Several countries highlighted the decade review of 1998 UNGA Special Session commitments that reinforce the implementation of the three drug conventions. The Millennium Development Goals were consistently referenced, with many speakers noting that achievement of these goals was necessary to eliminate some of the underlying causes of crime, such as poverty. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime noted its support for the creation of a new General Assembly Global Action Plan against trafficking in persons, which was echoed by several other speakers. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime also solicited more funding to carry out its "broad and wide" mandate, and many developing countries pleaded for more assistance to bolster their efforts in these matters. END SUMMARY.

¶2. In three formal meetings on October 9 and 10, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Third Committee discussed crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control. Experts from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration, and the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders spoke, along with representatives from 49 countries. INL A/S Johnson delivered the U.S. statement, which focused on the need to eliminate corporate and public corruption in line with the UN Convention Against Corruption. He also underscored the importance of the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, and highlighted progress in the fight against drug trafficking in Colombia and Afghanistan, as well as the ongoing review of the 1998 UNGA Special Session commitments. The complete text can be found at [www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov](http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov) (press release #267). The Millennium Development Goals were consistently referenced, with many speakers noting that achievement of these goals was necessary to eliminate some of the underlying causes of crime, such as poverty. Developing countries called upon the developed countries to fulfill their assistance commitments, and noted the need for greater overall funding to bolster their efforts to address the problems of crime and drugs.

UNODC'S EFFORTS DRAW MIXED PRAISE, CRITICISM

¶3. Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Antonio Maria Costa underscored the correlation between weak socio-economic performance and weak rule of law, which he said caused the "vicious cycle" of countries too poor to fund capable governments being vulnerable to crime and violence. The Indian PermRep disagreed with Costa,

emphasizing the need to stop blaming the drug problem on underlying causes and to focus instead on implementing strategies to tackle the immediate, concrete causes of crime, like terrorism financing. While many speakers noted appreciation for the UNODC's efforts, they also mentioned that funding constraints were preventing the office from fulfilling its broad mandate, which Costa also conceded. The UNODC's closure of its regional office in Barbados drew criticism from the Caribbean nations, which said the closure left a "vacuum" in regional crime prevention and drug control efforts. India also criticized the closure, noting that the Caribbean was a "hotbed" of drug-related activity.

#### DRUGS: SOME PROGRESS, BUT SITUATION FRAGILE

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¶4. The UNODC Executive Director and many other speakers cited the latest World Drug Report statistic that occasional drug use has been contained to less than five percent of the world population, and severe drug use to less than 0.5 percent. However, as Costa cautioned, the situation is fragile, and greater emphasis must be put on drug prevention and treatment -- a sentiment echoed by many others. The European Union, via France's statement, called for increased and broader "harm reduction" interventions. There was consensus that although there was a global decrease in abuse of cocaine and opiates such as opium and heroin, illegal use of cannabis remained a problem, and the use of amphetamines was increasing, particularly in East Asia. Israel noted a growing trend among youth of the illegal use of inhalants and legitimate medicines like cough syrup. Many speakers noted the need for more efforts to limit the accessibility of precursor chemicals commonly used in the manufacture of

illicit drugs, and Thailand stressed the need for better exchange of data and intelligence on chemical shipments. Several countries also noted the need for greater adherence to the three drug conventions.

#### REGIONAL DRUG ISSUES

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¶5. Several speakers noted that opium poppy cultivation, production of opium and heroin and transport from the Afghanistan-Iran-Pakistan region (but particularly Afghanistan) continued to cause problems throughout the world. Afghanistan, for its part, acknowledged that the drug problem remained the biggest impediment to its long-term security, development, and effective governance. The Afghan statement also noted the direct link between opium poppy cultivation/heroin production and terrorism, calling for increased international efforts to break the link. Iran blamed the coalition forces in Afghanistan for accelerating opium cultivation, and said the Iranian government had dedicated significant resources to strengthening border control, claiming that it had been responsible for 80 percent of global opium and heroin seizures.

¶6. Colombia highlighted its efforts to combat the "devastating" drug problem that had plagued the country, which the speaker deemed to have been successful, including aerial spraying of coca crops. One reason for Colombia's success was the provision of productive alternative development programs for farmers who ceased cultivation of illicit crops. Colombia called for greater donor support to alternative development programs. Venezuela criticized the United States for singling it out as a drug producer; rather, the speaker said, Venezuela was being used as a transit route for drug trafficking, although it was engaged in several anti-drug initiatives. Bolivia reiterated support for its citizens, right to use the coca leaf for "traditional cultural purposes." Lebanon exercised its right of reply to counter Israel's indication that one of its neighbors was uncooperative in anti-drug efforts, stating that Lebanon was cooperative and pointing to Israel as the center of the "ecstasy" drug industry (citing U.S. and UN reports).

## ADDRESSING TRANSNATIONAL CRIME REQUIRES COORDINATION

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¶7. Speakers focused on the "illicit interlude" of transnational organized crime, noting that trafficking in drugs, weapons, and persons and money-laundering were cyclical and often linked to terrorism (particularly drug trafficking). Seriously combating these crimes would require intensified international coordination, several speakers noted. There was consensus that corruption created a breeding ground for organized crime, and developing countries complained that without adequate resources, fighting corruption remained an "uphill battle." Malaysia and Indonesia raised the issue of piracy in international waters, stressing that while the UN Security Council was examining the issue, other crimes linked to piracy, such as ransom, should be addressed by the third committee. Cuba said it was "absurd" that "certain States" promoting illegal migration were working to establish guidelines for fighting it. The speaker specifically referenced the Cuban Adjustment Act, which he said encouraged illegal migration and smuggling of Cuban citizens into the United States.

## CALLS FOR SUPPORT TO A NEW TIP ACTION PLAN

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¶8. The UNODC Executive Director and a number of speakers called for support to a General Assembly Global Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons (TIP). As Costa explained, the upcoming discussions in Vienna would address the legal and technical aspect of combating TIP, however, unified political will was also necessary. The International Organization for Migration noted the potential value of an action plan, but emphasized that TIP could not be separated from the broader context of migration. (The only group to speak in support of the Action Plan was the Commonwealth of Independent States, via Belarus' statement.)  
Khalilzad